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DESCRIPTION *of an* ANCIENT MONUMENT  
*in the* CHURCH *of* LUSK *in the County of* DUBLIN.  
*By* Colonel CHARLES VALLANCEY, *Member of the*  
*Royal Societies of London, Edinburgh and Dublin, &c. Communi-*  
*cated by the Earl of* CHARLEMONT, *P. R. I. A.*

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THIS monument (or tomb-stone) was found covered with earth in the church of Lusk in the year 1753, when a fair drawing of it was made by Mr. Martin Gaven. One corner is broken off, which contained the letter H in the word *Hic*, and probably the M in the date was either omitted or also broken off. Read March 3, 1789.

THE stone measures five feet five inches in length, two feet two inches in breadth, and is five inches thick. The inscription is very legible, and is as follows:

( T 2 )

*hic*

hic jacet walterus  
dermout et uxor ēv monica qorū  
atābns  
pitiētur (c) amen 1911's  
anno dmn  
cccc HV ||

Hic jacet Walterus Dermout et uxor ejus Monica, quorum animabus, propitiatur Christus, amen Jesus. Anno Domin. &c.

I WILL not here dispute whether the word following *propitiatur* be designed for *Christus* or *Nion*; it has more the appearance of the latter; and we know the Irish Christians expressed sometimes the name of the *Messiah* by the Chaldean word *Nion* \*.

THE figures on the stone denote the Trinity, with the Messiah on the cross. But there is an *unique* in this monument I have not met with on any other, formed since the introduction of

\* *Vindication of the ancient history of Ireland*, p. 200.

Christianity. At the side of our blessed Saviour are two hands open, pointing to the names of the deceased. There is no circumstance in our Saviour's life that can any way be alluded to by these hands, and from the position of them I am induced to think they are *Hieroglyphics*.

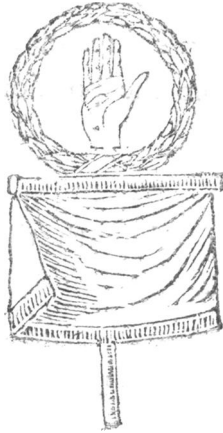
No symbol was more in use with the Ægyptians and with the ancient Irish than the *hand*.

THE sign armorial of the kings of Ireland was the hand pointing upwards; it was painted red, and is still the arms of the O'Brien family, with this motto, *Lamh laidir an uachdar*, i. e. "the strong hand up," or "the strong hand will prevail."

THUS the monarchs *Lugh*, *Reachta* and *Cathal*, obtained the names of the *red hand*; as *Lugh-Lamhdhearg*, *Reachta-Righdhearg*, *Cathal-Crobhdhearg*; for *lamh*, *righ* and *crobh*, are synonyma for the hand.

THE Romans had a standard on which was painted an *hand erect*, as we find among the figures of the Trojan column; it was a symbol of power\* which has escaped the notice of the Roman antiquaries.

\* See KENNET's *Antiq.* JUST. LIPSIVS, &c.



*Manus auctoritatem & potestatem signatissimè indicat †. Manus sacra infert altaribus & pietatis omne munus peragit ‡. “ The hand “ of the Lord shall be exalted,” says the Psalmist; and the prophet Jeremiah, speaking of the power of God, says, “ as the clay in “ the potter’s hand, so is the house of Israel in the hand of “ God.”*

THE metaphorical sense of the Hebrew word יד *iod*, a *hand*, is used more largely (observes Mr. Bates in his *Lexicon*) than we use the word in English; it signifies *the power or means by which any thing exerts itself; the power or ability of any person*; with a double D, ידד it signifies shouting or clapping of hands. Parkhurst defines the same word to import the hand of a man, the

† *Pierii Hieroglyph. ex sacris Ægypt. literis*, p. 357.

‡ *Ibidem*.

paw of a beast, power, ability, means, assistance, endeavour, contrivance, a border, extremity, side, a tract, tenons, (resembling hands) stays, projecting fulcra, axes, axle-trees, parts, portions. Giving the hand to another was a token of submission. Homage is still preserved in many places by the persons who do the homage, kneeling down and putting his hands between the hands of the Lord. Ezekiah commands the children of Israel to give the hand unto Jehovah, that is, to submit themselves or ascribe the superiority to him. Thus the Heathens, stretching out their hands to Heaven, did acknowledge the power, and implore the assistance of their respective Gods.

——— “ duplices tendunt ad sidera palmas.”

IN the Arabic language *يد yed*, signifies the hand, power, vigour, strength, assistance, aid, protection, a benefit, service, surrender, submission; *بين يديه bin yedeh*, literally, between his hands, signifies, before him, in his presence. The word in Hebrew and Arabic is also applied to penitence, to confession, or as we say, *to make appear as plain as the palm of the hand*.

IN the Persian, the word *دست dest*, a hand \*, signifies power, strength, pre-excellence, superiority, victory, end, termination, limit, boundary; hence *destan*, a key, pin or peg of a musical instrument. *Ligatura in collo instrumenti musici, a dest manus, quæ illis imposita chordæ variat tonas* †. *Destè*, a handful, a

\* In Irish *deas*, the right hand.

† GOLIVS, p. 826.

sheaf, a nosegay; *deftan*, a collection, history, romance; *deftur*, a prime minister, senator, counsellor, i. e. *the right hand of the state*; a collection, record, chronicle; whence the Irish *deafatan*, a repository, history, record, chronicle.

FROM the Arabic and Persian *مَنَّ* *menn*, or *men*, benevolent, benign, propitious, favourable, conferring a benefit, beneficence, grace, favour, is derived the Irish *man*, a hand, signifying the instrument of beneficence; so, from יָד *iod*, the hand in Hebrew, the Irish formed *edam*, to handle; from *carr*, good, (Arabic *حَار* *chara*, bene habuit, bono bonisque polluit) the Irish formed *carred*, a bosom friend, and the Arabians have *خير خواه* *kheir khauh*, of the same import; from *خير* *cher*, bonus vir. bono bonisque abundans\*.

IF we trace the word signifying a hand to the Egyptians, we shall find the same metaphorical significations; as *τὸτ* *dod* (Irish *doid*) a hand; *ἔτῳτ* *edod*, to have in possession; *erdod*, to have wealth and power—in fine

NOSTRIS manibus in rerum naturâ, quasi alteram naturam efficere conamur †.

BEFORE the invention of letters, those nations who used hieroglyphics or picture writing, must have expressed these different metaphorical significations by different positions of the hand,

\* GOLIVS.

† CICERO *de Nat. Deor*, l. 2d, c. 6o.

or hands; and this was the case with the Egyptians, as may be seen in Horus Appollo, and Pierius. The hand open and expanded was the hieroglyphic or symbol of benevolence and propitioufness; and the hands in the monument before us are placed close to the side of Christ, pointing to the names of the deceased—corresponding to the prayer—*quorum animabus propitiatur Christus* \*.

It is no very great compliment to the Hiberno-Scythians or ancient Irish to allow them the use of picture writing. Almost all nations, even the most barbarous, have practised it. The authors of the ancient part of the Universal History† tell us of a curious Hunno-Scythian MS. partly hieroglyphical, and partly alphabetical, still existing at Florence, and promise to treat at large upon it in the Modern History of the Hungarians. The authors of the modern part of this history have neglected to say more of it. Mat. Belus does also assure us the Hunno-Scythians do at this day make use of an alphabet, partly symbolical, and partly alphabetical‡.

It is recorded by the most serious historians, that when Darius demanded *earth* and *water* of the Scythians, as a token of homage,

\* To effect this, the inscription commences at the foot of the stone, instead of the head, as usual.

† Vol. xx. p. 18.

‡ Two very learned nations, the Egyptians and Chaldeans, did the same. See CAYLUS and CASSIODORUS, *ube sacra priscorum Chaldaeis signis, quasi literis, indicantur*. See also MARSHAM, *Seculum*, xvi. p. 4333.



and of surrendering their country to him ; instead thereof, Indathyrfus, their king, sent him a *bird*, a *mouse*, a *frog*, and *five arrows*. Darius would fain have construed these into a submission ; saying, the mouse is bred in the *earth*, the frog lives in *water*, and the bird may be compared to a *horse*, and by the arrows they seem to deliver their whole force into my hands. But Gobrias was of opinion that the Scythian gave them to understand by such a message, that unless the Persians could ascend into the air like a bird, or conceal themselves in the earth like mice, or plunge into the fens like frogs, they should inevitably perish by the arrows.

WE are told by Horus Apollo, that by the *hawk*, the Egyptians signified God, sublimity, excellence, humility, wind, blood, victory, the soul, &c. ; by the *dog*, a scribe, a prophet, spleen, smelling, laughter, sneezing, an officer, a judge, for reasons which appear as ridiculous as the meaning was precarious.

I CANNOT think that so wise a people as the Egyptians would register their public acts in so vague and uncertain a manner, and that we want the key to explain their symbols in a more satisfactory manner. That key appears to me to have been the synonyma of their language. As in the monument of Lusk *man* signifying the hand, implied also *propitiousness* ; *man* also signifies strength ; hence the hand, in another attitude, implies power. “ Du Celte *man*, fort, elevation, parfait en bonté, &c. &c. vinrent “ *man*, la main, lat. manus,” &c. &c. \*

\* GEBELIN, *Dict. Etymol. Lat.* p. 1124.

LET us now try to explain the symbolic answer of Indathyrfus, by the Hiberno-Scythian dialect, taking the synonyma of each object.

*Ean*, a bird, signifies also warlike instruments ; war, as in *Ean gniomh*, dexterity at weapons. Heb. *חנה* *hhane*, to war.

*Luc*, a mouse—a prisoner, an hostage.

*Losgan*, a frog—wounded, maimed in battle.

*Crann-corr*,  
and  
*Suam-nim*, } to cast lots by arrows ; fate, destiny ; and these  
were always five in number.

*Crann-corr* and *suam-nim* (i. e. *facere suam*) occur frequently in Irish, signifying to cast a fate by arrows. *Crann* is an arrow, as in *crann-tabhal*, a balista, or caster of arrows ; *suam* is the Arabic *سهام* *suham*, an arrow ; whence *suham-kuzza*, the arrow of destiny ; in Arabic *قران* *kuran*, or *قرن* *kurn*, is also an arrow ; whence our *crann*.

I THEREFORE interpret Indathyrfus's message thus, “ If you  
“ proceed in the war, the fate of your army will be, either to  
“ be taken prisoners, or be cut in pieces in the field.”

“ Exemplo patrum comnotus amore legendi  
“ Ivit ad Hibernos, fophiâ mirabili claros.”

EVEN mistaken writers, says Mr. Collins, by putting men upon enquiries, may make them see farther than themselves : and by this means both encrease the number of capable judges, and render some of the learned better judges than they were

before. “ Neque vero errasse turpe est, est enim initium sapientiæ ;  
 “ si non ei ipsi qui fallitur, at aliis non fallendi \*.”

SHOULD the learned favour this mode of explaining hieroglyphics and picture writing by synonyma, instead of the usual method, from the qualities of the thing represented, the attempt will afford me pleasure ; if not, the reader may still be indebted to my errors, and I trust to the censure of the public.

THE reading of Egyptian hieroglyphics by the various interpretations of the word, signifying the object painted or represented, seems to have struck *Horapollo*, or whoever was the author of that work, but it was barely conjecture :—*Βαι*, bai, says he, signified a hawk, the soul, and the wind, therefore the Egyptians used the hawk as a symbol for the soul. The word is written *bais* in the *Nomenclatura Egyptiaco-Arabica*, published by Kircher. Doctor Woide follows Kircher ; but in the *LEXICON COPTICO-GRÆCO*, in the *Bibliothèque du Roy* at Paris, we find *Βαι* bai, species aliqua accipitrum ; and the same occurs in Cælius, l. 4. c. 16, viz. “ opinantur Egyptii animæ conceptum esse *cor* ;  
 “ qua ratione cum accipitris nomine indicari *animam* putent,  
 “ illum vocabulo gentilitio *βαιηθ*, bai-eth, nuncupant, quod  
 “ *animam* signat & *cor* : siquidem *βαι*, anima est, *eth* vero  
 “ cor †.”

\* SCAL. *de Caus.* L. L.

† See also JABLONSKI *Egypt. Panth. Proleg.* p. cxxxvii. and EUSEBIUS *Præp.* l. 3. c. 12.

THIS brings to my mind another instance of Ægyptian hieroglyphics having been used by the Irish, and of having been blended with their monumental ornaments since Christianity, as in that of WALTER DERMOT before us.

ON the walls of the ruined abbey of *Magheo*\* or Knockmoy, the burial place of many kings of Connaught of the *Hy-Briun* race, are the skeletons of several of these kings, painted in fresco over their tombs, and on the hands of the figures are represented *hawks* in the attitude of rising to fly, to signify the separation of the soul from the body.

THESE hieroglyphics are perfectly agreeable to the Irish language as well as to the Ægyptian, for *bai*, *be*, *bi*, *ba*, signify life, the soul and wind; *badbh* or *ba-dubh*, the north wind, because blowing from *dub*, the bear, *ursa major*, or north pole.

IN my VINDICATION OF THE ANCIENT HISTORY OF IRELAND, p. 79 and p. 541, several Ægyptian hieroglyphics are explained by synonyms of the Irish language, and to this language the learned must be indebted for the explanation of most other Ægyptian symbols where the old Egyptian dialect is lost.

THE learned Gebelin seems to have formed some idea of interpreting or reading the Ægyptian hieroglyphics by the various meanings of the word, expressing the symbol, but he has not made more observations than one, viz. that *hours* or *days* were represented by an *ape*, because the word signifying an *ape*, does

\* *Magh-ee*, i. e. the plains of the graves or the field of sepulchres.

also signify a *revolution* ; therefore, adds this author, search the dictionaries for the word signifying the object painted, and write down all the various meanings of the same word ; do the same by each hieroglyphic, and the sense of the whole may be collected \*.

WE have reason to think Mons. Gebelin is right ; but how are we to come at the knowledge of these words in a language now lost ?

C. VALLANCEY.

\* GEBELIN, *Origine de l'Ecriture*, p. 384.